

CEPPS
Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening



CEPPS Quarterly Report: January 1, 2014 – March 31, 2014

NEPAL: Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes
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NDI: Total budget: \$15,222,000 Expenses to date: \$8,746,606

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Strengthening Political Parties, Electoral and Legislative Processes (SPPELP) program, CEPPS seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal;
- strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants;
- civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes;
- the CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions; and
- an international assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes.

Following the successful Constituent Assembly (CA) election on November 19, 2013, and the resultant political squabbles, the new CA held its first meeting on January 22, 2014. Sushil Koirala, president of the Nepali Congress (NC), was elected Prime Minister on February 10, followed by the appointment of a 23 member cabinet on April 4. As cabinet members and CA representatives turn to their elected priorities, CEPPS engaged with its political party partners,

the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN), the Constituent Assembly – Legislature Parliament (CA-LP), civil society and other stakeholders for post-election activities to lay the groundwork for an expanded and inclusive local government election, further engaged citizenry, the promulgation of a new constitution, and a highly functioning and independent election commission.

CEPPS/IFES supported several post-CA election events, bringing together electoral stakeholders to identify lessons learned and make recommendations for future elections. These meetings included post-election review workshops with District Election Officers and Returning Officers, as well as with IFES' sub-grantee civil society organizations (CSOs). The events enabled the ECN to complete its review process and publish an 11 point declaration—the “Godavari Proposal”—identifying recommendations for future elections. Working with the ECN and BRIDGE partners UNDP-ESP and International IDEA, CEPPS/IFES contributed to BRIDGE events. It provided agendas, participant lists and an international expert for the Election Systems workshop, as well as a series of trainings on electoral processes for ECN staff.

CEPPS/IFES assisted the ECN in reviewing legal frameworks related to local government elections and facilitated meetings on the draft amendments to the Local Self Governance Act, 1999 and Local Bodies Election Procedure Act, 1992. These amendments aim to improve representation of marginalized groups and ensure proportionate inclusion of female candidates in the local government elections. Reflecting gender commitments, one of the ECN's greatest accomplishments this quarter was the establishment of a Gender and Inclusion Committee and Unit, which CEPPS/IFES strongly recommended. As a free standing body within the ECN, the Gender Unit will enhance gender integration efforts throughout the ECN's work.

Contributing to the ECN's voter education materials and capacity, CEPPS/IFES provided technical services and translated materials for the Election Education and Information Center (EEIC). Other activities included: working with the IT section of the ECN to develop the Training Management Information System (TMIS), which will house a training database; designing a trainer's resource book; and facilitating the trainings for the ECN's social studies teachers program. CEPPS/IFES is also developing a flipchart for teachers and an “education kit” for the students.

Through an intensive survey, CEPPS/IFES' CSO partners evaluated the impact of their pre-election voter and electoral education programs. The results reflected their substantial impact in elevating inclusion and participation among youth, women, Dalits and freed Kamaiyas. For example, the mock polling exercises conducted prior to the CA election resulted in less than 1.6 percent invalid votes in targeted communities. Partner CSOs also set up help-desks to support the continuous voter registration process at the District Election Offices and District Administration Offices. Finally, this quarter marked the scaling-up of the new citizenship certificate project, which aims to improve democratic participation of marginalized communities by enhancing access to citizenship documents.

In the post-election period, CEPPS/NDI worked with its political party partners to identify parties' most pressing needs and create activities to address these priority issues. CEPPS/NDI and its partners focused on party reorganization, the increased inclusion of women and youth in

party leadership and coalition building. To support a common youth agenda in the constitution-drafting process, CEPPS/NDI held a national workshop for 45 members of the Future Leadership Academy (FLA). CEPPS/NDI supported the Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) in conducting a post-election gender audit to analyze the election and provide recommendations to improve women's representation. By focusing on women and youth, CEPPS/NDI aims to increase the role of these groups in political processes during the critical months ahead.

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews (IN) initiated the second wave of national opinion polls and supported the national and regional broadcast of radio program Loktantra Mantra, which continues to air programming based on the opinion poll results. These opinion polls present an opportunity for political leaders and government officials to gauge public sentiment on major issues, including federalism and expectations for the CA-LP.

At the conclusion of the CA election, CEPPS/NDI began preparations for a series of regional and national electoral reform workshops designed to review current election laws and provide reform recommendations based on lessons learned from the November 2013 election. As local elections are slated to be held in calendar year 2014, these workshops will play an important role in identifying needed reforms and creating an implementation strategy. In coordination with CEPPS/NDI, subgrantee Democracy and Elections Watch – Nepal (DEW-Nepal) submitted its final election observation report to the ECN, planned activities for the upcoming CA by-election, and developed a long-term strategy to be employed through local elections.

As 80 percent of the new CA-LP members did not serve in the previous CA, these members of parliament (MPs) have limited knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in constitution-drafting and legislative processes. CEPPS/NDI, in partnership with the Parliament Secretariat, organized a new member orientation for 373 MPs and 49 Secretariat officials. To draft a new constitution and conduct their legislative duties successfully, MPs must improve their knowledge of the CA-LP rules and regulations, formal procedures, and lawmaker conduct.

In recognition of the critical link between political stability and economic development, CEPPS/NDI partnered with the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) to host an event for young leaders that emphasized the connection between governance and economic reform. By working with youth CA members and FLA participants, CEPPS/NDI aims to strengthen these leaders' roles in creating reform-minded policies and legislation that can benefit political and economic development in Nepal.

II. PROGRAM CONTEXT

On January 2, 2014, the ECN declared the final results of the November 19, 2013, CA elections. Twenty-six (26) appointed CA members have yet to be nominated by the Cabinet to reach the full 601-member CA-LP. Despite disagreements over committee membership and statutes, the CA held its first meeting on January 22, 2014. The LP held its inaugural meeting on January 26.

Sushil Koirala, president of the NC, the largest party represented in the CA, was elected Prime Minister on February 10. On the same day, NC and the Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) formed a coalition government, with the Unified Communist Party

of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) and other smaller parties forming the opposition. In late March, the CA agreed to take ownership over all of the agreements and decisions made by the former CA. Working from previously adopted agreements will provide the new CA an opportunity to focus on the important task of promulgating a constitution.

The CA Secretariat planned to release a timeline for the constitutional drafting process by mid-April to ensure promulgation of a new constitution by its January 2015 deadline. The timeline will likely include voting and/or public consultations on the draft constitution in October 2014, giving citizens the opportunity to take ownership over new legal provisions. In addition to supporting citizen engagement, CEPPS/IFES will work with the ECN to help define and propose a new electoral system to be integrated into the constitution.

To raise the likelihood that a new constitution will be in place by January 2015, political parties are now working on coalition building and maintaining relationships with the opposition. During this quarter, CEPPS/NDI met with its political party partners to assess their needs and find solutions to priority issues that may hinder political progress. CEPPS/NDI will continue its partnership with the Parliament Secretariat to provide training and support to new CA-LP members and parliamentary committees.

Despite a CA party agreement to hold local elections within six months of the formation of the new government, Chief Election Commissioner Neel Kantha Uprety asserted that local elections would be almost impossible to hold before June 2014. Local elections were last held in 1997 for village development committees (VDCs), district development committees (DDCs) and municipal bodies elected to five-year terms. Since these terms expired in 2002, over 4,000 local bodies have been running without elected representatives, highlighting the urgent need to push local elections forward. In March, the government announced that by-elections would take place as early as June 22.

The ECN prepared for local government elections by reviewing and submitting an amendment to the current Local Body Election Procedures Act 1992, which would set a 50 percent candidacy quota for women in executive positions in local body committees. These would include local councils, district committees, wards and municipalities. Complementing the ECN's draft amendment, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development submitted another amendment for the Local Self Governance Act to mandate 40 percent female representation in the local council. These amendments provide a significant opportunity to advance inclusion and proportional representation among local representatives.

As Nepal moves into this critical post-election phase, CEPPS continues to provide support to political parties, inclusion-focused legislative advice, capacity building to the ECN and outreach to marginalized groups in order to encourage citizen engagement, adoption of inclusive electoral systems and consolidation of democratic gains.

III. OBJECTIVES

CEPPS Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties

CEPPS/IFES Objective 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections

Sub-Objective 2.C: Strengthened electoral management capacity of ECN

Sub-Objective 2.D: Expanded and improved delivery of voter education

CEPPS/NDI Objective 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process

CEPPS Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the legislature

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

CEPPS Objective 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

IV. ACTIVITIES

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Intermediate Result 1.1: Political parties are more representative of Nepali citizens

Intermediate Result 1.2: Political parties in Nepal more effectively implement competitive electoral campaigns

Intermediate Result 1.3: Citizens have more information and analysis on the policy differences across political parties in Nepal

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations.

Sub-Objective 1.A.1: Effective Party Organizing and Outreach

Consultations/Meetings with Political Party Leaders

During this quarter, CEPPS/NDI held a series of meetings with its political party partners that focused on identifying 1) the needs of individual parties and how these can be addressed in future program activities; 2) obstacles to women's political participation and CEPPS/NDI's activities to address these barriers. CEPPS/NDI shared international examples on the role the secretariat can play in strengthening the party organization, including planning party activities such as party conventions and national conferences. Parties also received resources on internal strategy development for expanding party reach and potential challenges in these activities.

Table 1: Consultative Meetings with Political Party Leaders

Date	Party	Party Representatives
January 9, 2014	NC	Binod Bhatrai, Central Committee Member (CCM)
January 10, 2014	CPN-UML	Parshu Meghi Gurung, CCM
January 10, 2014	RPP	Bhuban Pathak, Head of Training Department
February 24, 2014	UCPN-M	Hon. Shakti Basnet, Satya Pahadi and Lucky Sherpa, CCMs
February 28, 2014	RRP-N	Hon. Sushil Kumar Shrestha, Office Secretary; Shyam K.C., Head of Training Department
March 3, 2014	RPP	Bhuban Pathak, Head of Training Department; Neena Bhetwal, President of Women's Wing
March 11, 2014	CPN-UML	Binda Pandey, President of Women's Wing
March 13, 2014	UCPN-M	Sashi Shrestha, President of Women's Wing
March 14, 2014	RPP-N	Hon. Kunti Shahi, President of Women's Wing
March 25, 2014	MJFN-D	Bhartendu Mallik, CCM; Anuradha Yadav, President of Women's Wing

CEPPS/NDI and UCPN-M leaders identified party needs and how CEPPS/NDI can best assist with its planned programming. Meeting participants discussed issues related to party reorganization, how to strengthen the secretariat to function as the main coordinating body in the party, how to strategically select districts/areas to strengthen the party at the local level, and how to strengthen the relationship between the party organization and its elected CA-LP members.

CEPPS/NDI and Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N) discussed potential programmatic support to RPP-N as a new political party partner. The meeting served as an introduction to CEPPS/NDI's work in Nepal and allowed RPP-N to explain more about its party and future plans.

Party Consultations on Coalition Formation

From February 5 to 7, former Norwegian prime minister Hon. Kjell Magne Bondevik and Oslo Center senior advisor Bjarte Tora visited Nepal to share experiences on coalition formation and interparty cooperation with Nepali political leaders. The visit coincided with discussions between major party leaders regarding coalition forming after the November 2013 CA elections and an ongoing discussion among political leaders on creating an all-party inclusive consultative mechanisms for the constitution drafting process.

During the three-day visit, CEPPS/NDI facilitated two major multiparty consultations between political parties, Hon. Bondevik and Mr. Tora. Hon. Bondevik met with NC President Sushil Koirala, NC senior leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN-UML President Jhal Nath Khanal and CPN-UML Parliamentary Party leader K.P. Sharma Oli. The meetings focused on how coalitions can create mechanisms for internal communication, compromise and consultations. Hon. Bondevik shared personal experiences based on leading two coalition governments in Norway. He highlighted the need to develop trust among the coalition partners. Hon. Bondevik provided practical tips, including the importance of creating informal settings where coalition members can meet and better understand each other's positions.

Hon. Bondevik and Tora also met with NC coalition government negotiation taskforce members Deep Kumar Upadhayay and Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat on issues related to coalition negotiations. This meeting focused on creating a win-win situation for the parties involved in coalition formation. Bondevik emphasized that the negotiation environment will define the conditions under which the coalition government will operate once it is formed.

Consultative Meeting with UCPN-M

CEPPS/NDI organized a meeting between Hon. Bondevik and UCPN-M Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal. This meeting focused on the important role the opposition can play and what mechanisms the opposition could suggest to create consultation mechanisms on issues of national importance, with constitution-drafting being the most important current issue.

Consultative Meetings with FLA Members

This quarter, CEPPS/NDI continued its work with the FLA to promote youth involvement in politics through consultative meetings and a national workshop.

In February and March, CEPPS/NDI held a series of meetings with 10 FLA members,

"There are many youth leaders in the current CA, many of whom will be members in or chairs of different committees. It will be important for FLA graduates to coordinate with these lawmakers so they can influence the committees they represent. There are a number of influential youth leaders in the current CA, like Gagan Thapa (NC) and Rabindra Adhikary (CPN-UML). FLA graduates must look for ways to build working relation with these influential leaders."

Tularaj Sinkhada (CPN-UML), FLA Graduate

representing five political parties, in the Kathmandu Valley and its surrounding districts. The consultative meetings focused on: assessing the post-election role of youth in politics; how to increase this role; how youth in political parties can increase linkages to young CA members; political issues that could form the basis for a youth advocacy agenda; topics for upcoming national and regional FLA trainings; and developing FLA into a stronger platform for developing cross-party relationships between youth party members.

Following these meetings, CEPPS/NDI consulted with FLA members on ways to strengthen their network across political parties and to assist in developing a strategy for increasing the role of youth in Nepali politics.

During his visit, former Norwegian prime minister Hon. Kjell Magne Bondevik met FLA representatives and young elected CA members. At this informal session, participants focused on the importance of defining a platform for political engagement.

National Workshop for FLA Members – Phase IV

On March 20 and 21, CEPPS/NDI organized a national residential workshop for 45 FLA members, including 22 women, representing 10 political parties from 30 districts.¹ The one-and-a-half-day workshop focused on imparting technical knowledge to better equip FLA members with training and facilitation skills to prepare themselves as youth trainers and to lead future regional youth activities.



FLA members during the national workshop

CEPPS/NDI's Political Party Program Director John Lovdal, Stairway Management Director Mahesh Dahal, and Transparency International Secretary Bharat Bahadur Thapa facilitated the workshops and focused on practical ways for youth to be involved in decision-making and inter-party youth engagement. They discussed the role of young political leaders in fighting corruption. CA members Hon. Rabindra Adhikari and Hon. Kiran Yadav shared their political experiences as citizens' representatives and emphasized the importance of having a common political agenda with political parties' youth. The workshop participants created a strategy for the FLA to develop a strong platform for creating links between youth political party members and their counterparts in the CA. To form a common political agenda, FLA members formed a 13-member ad-hoc planning committee.

¹ The 30 districts represented include: Bardiya, Baglung, Banke, Bara, Bhaktapur, Bhojpur, Dailekh, Dang, Dhading, Dhanusha, Gulmi, Jajarkot, Jhapa, Kailali, Kalikot, Kanchanpur, Kapilbastu, Kaski, Kathmandu, Khotang, Mahottari, Morang, Nawalparasi, Nuwakot, Parsa, Pyuthan, Rupandehi, Sarlahi, Siraha and Sunsari.

Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA)

On March 8, NDI supported the IPWA² in celebrating the 104th International Women's Day and IPWA's eight-year anniversary. More than 100 women activists from different political parties, women's NGOs, and media attended the event. IPWA Vice President Kalyani Rijal highlighted the important role women had played throughout Nepal's political history, saying that while women are always in the forefront, "when it comes to power sharing, women are often sidelined by men." She provided the example of only having two women in the current cabinet. IPWA chairperson and Hon. Minister of Energy Radha Gyawali emphasized that women will continue to fight for their rights in politics. Gyawali stressed her own commitment to ensure that a reduction in load shedding accounts for women's needs and priorities, with particular emphasis on having electricity in the evening to allow working women to prepare meals for their families. During the event, Gyawali and CA deputy chairperson Hon. Onsari Gharti unveiled IPWA's second bulletin, which summarizes current women's political representation at the local level and in the CA and provides recommendations for increased participation.

From March 23 to 24, CEPPS/NDI supported IPWA in conducting a post-election gender audit workshop to: analyze the November 2013 election; draw conclusions on election performance; identify barriers to women's participation; and provide recommendations to strengthen the participation of women in politics. Eighty (80) women leaders participated in the two-day workshop, including current and former CA members representing 14 political parties. Four Nepali experts from IPWA's executive committee presented reasons for women's under-representation and reviewed the legal framework for women in politics. Based on the workshop, IPWA will develop a report detailing recommendations to improve women's representation; this report could also be used as an advocacy tool to lobby for improved women's representation in the constitution-drafting and electoral reform processes.

33 Percent Campaign

On January 15, CEPPS/NDI met with the four women's NGOs (Media Advocacy Group, Sancharika Samuha, Didi Bahini and Saathi) leading the 33 percent advocacy campaign to discuss possible activities to pressure political parties to nominate more women for the 26 available CA seats. The discussion included ideas for targeted meetings with the top leadership of the four major political parties in the CA and newspaper advertisements.

Sub-Objective 1.A.2: Cross-Party Consensus Building

Meeting with Madhesh-based Parties

Former Norwegian prime minister Hon. Kjell Magne Bondevik also met with three Madheshi parties: Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal (MJF-N), Sadbhavana Party (SP), and Terai-Madhesh Democratic Party (TMDP). As these three parties are working to form an alliance, the discussion

² The IPWA, established in 2006, represents 14 political parties and advocates for women's rights. It has district sub-committees in 71 of 75 districts across the country.

centered on the challenges of merger negotiations. Hon. Bondevik and Mr. Tora shared how such a process needs to be designed to create ownership and to ensure all parties involved in the merger feel they have benefitted from the arrangement. The meeting highlighted the challenges the three parties are facing in their merger efforts, including party structure and leadership issues.

Meetings with the High Level Political Committee and Senior Leaders

Hoon. Bondevik and Tora met with senior party leaders from the High Level Political Committee (HLPC), a group of politicians from Nepal's major political parties. Participants discussed the importance of an all-party mechanism in securing consensus and compromise on major national issues. Hon. Bondevik shared his experiences from Norway, where such consultations have created political consensus on major reform issues.

Aside from multiparty meetings, Hon. Bondevik and Tora met with CA-LP Chairman Hon. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Parliament Secretariat Secretary General Manohar Bhattarai, USAID Mission Director Beth Dunford, U.S. Ambassador Peter W. Bodde and the Royal Norwegian Ambassador Kjell Tormod Pettersen.

CEPPS/NDI organized a meeting between Hon. Bondevik and Chief Election Commissioner Neel Kantha Uprety during which they discussed how the ECN can secure support from political parties when developing a new political party law. Tora shared his experiences working on political party law in Kenya, where the election commission played a critical role in involving political parties in the development process and in creating a common understanding among the political parties on how the new law should be implemented. Participants agreed that CEPPS/NDI could play a role in facilitating consultations with political parties on the work of developing a political party act in Nepal.

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties.

National Opinion Polls

In February 2014, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN and its partner Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) conducted the second "Hear Us" national opinion poll. Polling questions concentrated on post-election review, insight into political parties and public perceptions, people's views on federalism, people's level of trust toward organizations and institutions, sequencing of elections, and primary media consumption behaviors. Internews randomly selected 31 of Nepal's 75 districts to conduct the survey (*please see Appendix I for the map of selected districts*).

Using a random sampling technique, IN administered a pre-coded, structured questionnaire to 3,000 respondents. The margin of error was +/- 1.8 percent at a 95 percent confidence level at the national level. The survey does not claim the same level of precision at either the regional or the district levels. Fifty field personnel (15 supervisors and 35 interviewers) conducted fieldwork from February 2 to February 24. Staff participated in a two-day training, which covered survey objectives, research methods, sampling design, and other considerations. Trainees also conducted mock interviews to familiarize themselves with the survey questionnaire. IN processed and

analyzed the data to obtain the results of the poll. (See Appendices II-IV for the summary report and detailed findings from the second wave of the national opinion poll.)

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants

Intermediate Result 2B.1: Improved legal framework that ensures transparent electoral procedures that promote genuine and competitive elections

Intermediate Result 2B.2: Legal framework is a product of inclusive, public dialogue

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections

Technical Support and Capacity Building (Electoral Systems and Political Party Related Legislation)

Activities focused on legal revisions to improve proportional representation and inclusion of women in local bodies, including at the Village, District and Municipality level. CEPPS/IFES facilitated meetings, developed meeting agendas, and invited participants, including representatives from the ECN, the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and the Ministry of Home Affairs among other stakeholders to advocate for inclusion-focused amendments to the Local Self Governance Act and the Local Bodies Election Procedure Act. As a result of CEPPS/IFES' assistance in legal review and persistent lobbying for inclusion measures, both draft Acts now include provisions for fielding 40 percent female candidates in the local council and 50 percent female candidates for executive positions in the local bodies.

To raise awareness around the draft gender amendment to the Local Bodies Election Procedure Act, CEPPS/IFES helped the ECN to organize a meeting with 31 participants (18 women, 13 men) within two days of the adoption of the proposed amendments. Participants included members of the Gender and Inclusion Committee, female leaders of major political parties, CA members and representatives from partner agencies. The primary objective of this and following meetings was to inform and engage opinion leaders, especially women, so that they may in turn advocate within their respective structures for the passage of the amended Local Bodies Election Procedure Act through the CA. Attendees committed to advocate for this amendment within their respective structures and expressed the need for the ECN to organize additional programs with other political party leaders. CEPPS/IFES will facilitate in the upcoming quarter

Intermediate Result 2C.1: Percentage of citizens reporting confidence in the integrity and capacity of the ECN

Intermediate Result 2C.2: Number of benchmarks met in the implementation of the ECN's strategic plan

Sub-Objective 2.C: Strengthened electoral management capacity of ECN

Technical Assistance to the ECN in the Legal, Management and Technical Aspects of Elections

With CEPPS/IFES' technical and logistic support, the ECN conducted a 3-day annual review program. The review, which focused primarily on the CA election, brought together 78 District Election Officers (4 women, 74 men), 68 ECN headquarter staff including all five Commissioners (10 women, 58 men) and representatives from UNDP-ESP and International IDEA. Sessions included: presentations on CA election preparations and achievements by ECN senior staff; presentations by District Election Officers that focused on election preparations and achievements, challenges, recommendations; and collaboration in planning future ECN activities. Workshop participants passed the "2014 Godavari Declaration"³ and began compiling a lessons learned to inform the ECN's five-year strategy plan. CEPPS/IFES is drafting a concept note and a performance review of the previous strategic plan to guide this process.

CEPPS/IFES also provided technical and logistical support for four of the seven post-election review workshops for Returning Officers – two in Biratnagar, one in Nepalgunj and one in Dhangadi. CEPPS/IFES developed reporting and presentation formats and templates for ECN staff to report on its annual election activities, which were also used for the post-election review workshops. The ECN is compiling the feedback and suggestions from these review sessions to inform the upcoming strategic plan.

Based on lessons learned from the past election, CEPPS/IFES provided targeted advice to the ECN to amend the continuous voter registration forms. This led to a revised form that now requires only two of the voter's addresses: the one written on the citizenship certificate and the voter's permanent address. The requirement for a third address, which was the voter's registration address, has been eliminated. A second revision will improve information collection on five different types of disabilities, instead of the previous three. While this is an improvement, CEPPS/IFES had strongly advised the ECN to list the categories based on the Government of Nepal's seven classifications.

Finally, CEPPS/IFES program staff met repeatedly with commissioners and the ECN gender focal person to lobby the ECN to establish both a Gender and Inclusion Committee headed by an ECN commissioner, and a similar Gender and Inclusion Unit at the secretariat level headed by a Joint Secretary. The establishment of both was one of the greatest achievements of the quarter. Additionally, due to CEPPS/IFES' push for inclusive representation on the Gender Committee, three female members from national level organizations working for the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged communities are now represented. The three organizations are: the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN), the National Muslim Commission and the Backward Community Upliftment Development Committee.

Capacity Building

Activity 2.1 - Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

³ The Godavari Declaration is an 11 point declaration that seeks to enhance the overall electoral process by improving the voter roll, use of technology, training and staff incentives among other areas.

By funding and arranging all logistics, CEPPS/IFES facilitated the Electoral Administration and Management BRIDGE workshop for 24 new ECN officers, two of whom are women. The objective was to improve participants' capacity to manage electoral processes. The workshop was held in Dhulikhel from March 5-7 and covered a range of topics including the criteria for free and fair elections, principles of electoral management, the electoral cycle, the electoral legal framework and basics of electoral systems. Pre- and post-test results revealed a 61.3 percent increase in participant knowledge. CEPPS/IFES also organized a half-day workshop for 15 ECN staff, 5 of whom are women, to enhance participants' knowledge of different phases of the electoral process, including election administration and management, as well as continuous voter registration.

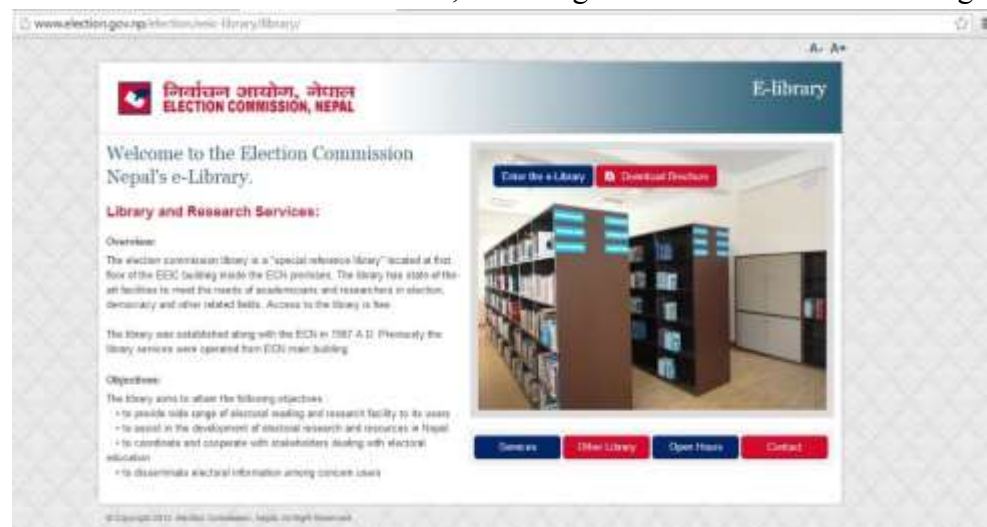
Finally, from March 25-28, CEPPS/IFES provided an election systems' expert to co-facilitate alongside International IDEA's BRIDGE facilitator a BRIDGE training on Election Systems. Twenty-five senior ECN officials and implementing partner staff participated. Participants actively engaged in the discussions and workgroups, reflecting on which electoral systems would best serve Nepal. The results of pre- and post- tests conducted for the Electoral System BRIDGE workshop reveal that electoral system knowledge increased by 37.5 percent. This knowledge will inform conversations as the ECN prepares to advise the newly elected CA on electoral reforms.

Activity 2.2 - Professional Exchange Assistance (Study Trips)

N/A – There were no professional exchange trips during this quarter.

Activity 2.3 – Organizational Capacity Building

CEPPS/IFES' technical assistance, including translation services and design, enabled the ECN to



an e-library from which books and documents can be downloaded by EEIC staff, and an independent ECN website – the Training Management Information System (TMIS). Among other uses, TMIS will be used as a repository for

more than 200,000 training resources utilized during the CA election. The ECN's IT department opted to build the website itself rather than outsourcing to an outside subcontractor, highlighting its enhanced internal capacity. CEPPS/IFES provided regular feedback on TMIS organization and development.

Finally, to commemorate International Women's Day, CEPPS/IFES prepared the presentation and talking points for the ECN's first "talk program." This talk program, the first in a monthly

series, addressed gender in elections, highlighted new gender provisions adopted before the CA election and identified areas for improvement.

Intermediate Result 2D.1: Percentage increase in citizens' knowledge about electoral processes following USG supported voter education

Sub-Objective 2.D: Expanded and improved delivery of voter education

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaigns

CEPPS/IFES continued to provide capacity building to the ECN and the EEIC, playing a major role in the development of the ECN's voter education and outreach plans, products and events. CEPPS/IFES developed training manuals, agendas and training content for the Social Study Teachers' Trainings at the EEIC on February 14, March 14 and March 31. The trainings aimed to: increase the understanding of secondary level social studies teachers on democracy, elections and electoral processes; build teachers' skills to conduct interactive sessions on aforementioned topics with students and their parents; and enhance knowledge of electoral processes among students and the community in general. A total of 71 teachers (17 women, 54 men) from 67 secondary schools (11 public and 56 private schools) have been trained to date. A training database was created to store and manage data for the Social Studies Teachers' Trainings, including lists of participating public and private institutions.



CEPPS/IFES is also providing social studies teacher materials, working closely with the EEIC team to develop an "education kit". The education kit will contain one electoral education flip chart, handout brochures and a pocket-sized handbook. The trained social studies teachers will use these materials to further educate their high school grade 9 and 10 students. Finally, at the end of the quarter, CEPPS/IFES is publishing 33,000 copies of the ECN-designed calendar for Nepali Year 2071. These calendars, which provide civic education messages, will be disseminated by

ECN and District Election Officers, as well as CSO sub-awardees at the district and Village Development Committee levels.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

This quarter, CEPPS/IFES provided funding to its six sub-awardees to produce and broadcast six, one-minute radio PSAs, five in Nepali language and one in Bhojpuri. The message focused on the reopening of the continuous voter registration facility at District Election Offices and District Administration Offices, and the need for citizenship certificates in order to register on the voter list. The PSAs were broadcast through FM stations in CEPPS/IFES' 26 target districts

5,604 times. Voter registration help desk volunteers at the District Administration Offices noticed an increase in the flow of visitors following broadcasting of the radio PSAs on FM stations.

The table below lists in detail the different voter education products developed and produced, or in the process of being produced, during the reporting period.

Table 2

Voter Education Products/events	Quantities/Number	
	For ECN	For CEPPS/IFES' CSOs
ECN Annual VE Wall Calendars	30,000	3,000
Flipchart on the Citizenship certificate process	-	3,000
Brochure on Citizenship certificate benefits	-	20,000
Flipchart on Electoral Education	5,000	-
Electoral education handout	100,000	-
Other materials		

Sub-grants to Selected NGOs to Develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

Post-Election Review and Survey Orientations: CEPPS/IFES trained its five partner CSOs – the Dalit National Federation, the Janaki Women’s Awareness Society, the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization, the Nepal National Social Welfare Association and Youth Initiative, to conduct post-election review sessions and surveys in the districts of Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rupandehi, Dhanusha, Kathmandu, Kaski and Morang. Trainings focused on conducting Village Development Committee-level post-electoral review sessions, respondent sampling and interviewing skills. A total of 112 (73 men and 39 women) enumerators completed the survey trainings.

Post-Election Survey: Using random sampling, a total of 2,912 respondents from targeted communities of women, freed Kamaiya groups, Terai and hill Dalits and youth were interviewed by community facilitators before the post-election review sessions at the Village Development Committee-level. Survey results reveal that 93.6 percent of respondents cast their vote in the CA election and 97.5 percent of votes were valid. When asked about preferred sources of information, respondents primarily indicated that they received voter education information from CEPPS/IFES-supported events such as mock polling events (67 percent) and door-to-door visits (74 percent), compared to other mediums. This data underscored the positive impact of CEPPS/IFES’ voter education efforts in marginalized communities.

Post-Election VDC-level Review Sessions: The five CSOs conducted 727 post-election Village Development Committee-level review sessions in 26 districts during the months of January and

February 2014; they reached a total of 15,411 voters (5,621 men and 9,790 women) capturing their experiences and views regarding the November 2013 CA election, as well as feedback on CSOs' electoral and voter education activities. The review sessions revealed that the door-to-door and people-to-people approach used by the CSOs for educating voters was highly effective. Mock polling and street drama events also proved to be some of the most effective activities in villages and local communities to motivate voters to participate in the election.

Voter Registration Support: CSO partners set up help-desks run by volunteers to support the District Administration Offices in 17 districts in implementing the continuous voter registration program. The CSOs assisted District Administration Office staff and potential voters in filling out the required forms and attendance sheets to maximize voter registration. At the end of this quarter, 8,546 voters had enrolled on the voter list at the District Administration Offices with assistance from CSO help-desks. CEPPS/IFES' CSOs also provided similar help-desk support to government mobile camps run jointly by District Election Offices and District Administration Offices, at which, in March alone, 870 citizens received citizenship certificates and 1,720 citizens registered on the voter list.

CSOs Training on Voter Registration, Electoral Participation and Citizenship Certificate Support to Marginalized Communities: After USAID-Nepal approved the 15-month contract (April 2014-June 2015) for CEPPS/IFES' five voter education partner CSOs, extending their partnership until June 2015, CEPPS/IFES conducted a three-day CSO training workshop in Chitwan. The workshop brought together program managers, finance managers and board/executive focal points from each organization. The main objectives of the training were to share the learning and achievements of the previous voter education programs and to introduce the methodology and activities of the new upcoming program, which will feature a strengthened focus on citizenship certificates. Capacity building initiatives included development of operational strategies and action plans and training on CEPPS/IFES monitoring and reporting tools and procedures.



Citizenship Certificate Project: In this quarter, CEPPS/IFES began implementation of its citizenship certificate program as mentioned above. In order to better understand citizenship issues within marginalized communities, CEPPS/IFES arranged meetings between the UNHCR, Dalit NGO Federation, Forum for Women Law and Development, Nepal Suppressed Community Protection Center and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Consultative meetings revealed that the many members of marginalized communities lack citizenship certificates due to poor

information, difficulty obtaining supporting documents, gender barriers and poor financial status. In January, CEPPS/IFES approached UNHCR to collaborate on production of citizenship materials targeting both marginalized communities and community facilitators. A joint collaboration is underway between CEPPS/IFES and UNHCR to prepare a simplified guidebook, pictorial flipchart, and informational brochure to inform and educate the local population in the districts on the importance and benefits of a citizenship certificates. CEPPS/IFES is designing, developing and producing the identified materials.

Disability Project: CEPPS/IFES’ disability project, implemented by sub-grantee National Federation of Disabled Nepal, has had a significant impact on increasing the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities within community and governance structures. The project mobilized six Disabled Peoples’ Organizations as well as district level partners and National Federation of Disabled Nepal community facilitators to educate 7,679 people (3,441 were men and 4,238 were women) from 327 different community groups on priority community issues. Similarly, members of Community Advocacy Forums and District Advocacy Forums received training on leadership and advocacy.

People with disabilities have played an active role in these community groups, bringing them closer to mainstream democratic development. As part of their advocacy events, 379 persons with disabilities (340 men and 104 women) participated in the Village Development Committee planning process and 127 persons with disability (73 men and 63 women) received disability ID cards. At the national level, National Federation of Disabled Nepal met with the ECN to advocate for representation in the recently established Gender and Social Inclusion Committee, which ECN approved.

Disability Election Access Monitoring (DEAM): In early February, CEPPS/IFES in coordination with the NFDN, organized a workshop at the EEIC to share the findings of the “Disability Election Access Monitoring” program in which NFDN mobilized 125 observers with disabilities (73 men and 52 women) to conduct election observation in the CA election. The findings were shared with the ECN, other national observer organizations, Disabled Peoples’ Organizations and other relevant stakeholders. A total of 64 participants (32 persons with disabilities, 37 men and 27 women), attended the event along with Chief Election Commissioner Mr. Neel Kantha Uprety and Commissioner Dr. P B Thakur. NFDN’s key findings included gaps in: (a) Data relating to voters with disabilities on the voter list (b) Training to poll workers on disability issues (c) Physical accessibility of polling centers and (d) Support mechanism for person with disabilities who need assistance. The final report will be published and disseminated to national and international stakeholders in the upcoming quarter.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

Intermediate Result 2.1: Non-partisan election monitoring efforts are more comprehensive and systematic.

Intermediate Result 2.2: Media are better informed to cover election related issues at the national and district levels.

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections.

Sub-Objective 2.A.1: Technical Assistance to Domestic Monitoring Partner(s)

Support to DEW-Nepal

CEPPS/NDI provided DEW-Nepal with a sub-award and technical assistance to observe the CA elections on November 19, 2013. During this quarter, DEW-Nepal submitted its final election observation report to the ECN; held a strategic planning workshop; and submitted a no-cost extension request to NDI. On February 6, CEPPS/NDI organized a strategic planning workshop for four DEW-Nepal committee members and one secretariat staff to develop a long-term plan from March 31 through local elections. During the workshop, DEW-Nepal conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, discussed developing strategies for its media and public outreach, internal communications, and management.



Media representatives at the DEW-Nepal election observation report press conference

On February 18, DEW-Nepal submitted its final election observation report to the ECN (*Appendix V*). Following the submission of the final report, DEW-Nepal held a press conference the same day to inform the media about the findings of their election observation. The report stated that the election took place in a “well managed and peaceful manner,” but noted that the ECN’s election code of conduct was not effectively implemented and used mainly for clarifications. For upcoming elections, DEW-Nepal recommended that the government of Nepal improve infrastructure for election management and security and the ECN conduct voter registration activities year round to provide citizens with sufficient time to register to vote.

DEW-Nepal Chair Prof. Dr. Novel Kishore Rai delivered the opening remarks, while DEW-Nepal member Sita Ram Kandel read the press statement and reiterated that the report is based on quantitative findings, Vice Chairperson Dr. Ganesh Gurung responded to media inquiries. Forty-six (46) people, including five DEW-Nepal Central Committee members and representatives from 17 different national television and print media groups, participated in the event. (*Please see Appendix VI for press coverage.*)

DEW-Nepal submitted a no-cost extension request and budget through June 15, 2014 to continue programming for the scheduled CA by-elections and local elections. DEW plans to execute the following activities during April 1-June 15, 2014:

- observe by-elections in four constituencies;
- study invalid votes in four districts where the invalid vote rates are high (7 to 9 percent);

- conduct national level training-of-trainers (ToT) on election observation and education in preparation for future elections; and
- implement a capacity building and strategic planning workshops for DEW-Nepal members.

Election Observation Coordination Group (EOCG) Meeting

From January to March 2014, CEPPS/NDI continued its collaboration with the National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) and organized three monthly coordination meetings: January 24 at NEOC; February 28 at NDI; and March 28 at Sankalpa. During these Election Observation Coordination Group (EOCG) meetings, participating organizations (*see Table 3*) shared programmatic and operational updates and discussed topics of mutual interest. These coordination meetings focused on post-election scenarios, final observation reports, and post-election activities, including by-elections, local elections, the nomination of 26 members to the CA-LP and the future strategy of EOCG. The discussions also confirmed activities of future partnership in relation to outcomes from CA observations to be collectively presented to the ECN leadership as well as discussions on future observation of the voter registration process.

Table 3: EOCG Membership

Domestic Election Observer Groups	National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) General Election Observation Committee (GEOC) Constituent Assembly Election Observation Joint Forum (CAEOF) Election Observation Coalition Nepal (EOC-N) Alliance for Election Observation Nepal (AEON) Sankalpa (Women's Alliance for Peace, Justice, and Democracy) News Club of Nepal DEW-Nepal
International Election Observer Groups	The Carter Center (TCC) Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) European Union (EU)
Implementing Agencies	TAF IFES United Nations Development Programme's Electoral Support Program (UNDP/ESP) NDI

Electoral Reform Dialogues

CEPPS/NDI initiated discussions with the ECN, IFES, DEW and other EOCG members to plan a series of electoral reform dialogues. These dialogues will serve to review current election laws and provide recommendations for reform based on lessons learned from the November 2013 CA elections. CEPPS/NDI plans to hold regional electoral reform dialogues in all five development regions.

To prepare for the electoral reform workshops, CEPPS/NDI met with ECN officials, including Chief Election Commissioner Hon. Neel Kantha Uprety, Joint Secretary Maheshwor Neupane, and Under Secretary Komal Dhamala. The Chief Commissioner expressed interest in collaborating with CEPPS/NDI on the regional electoral reform dialogues and suggested CEPPS/NDI plan to discuss the draft party law as well as electoral reform. CEPPS/NDI shared a concept note pertaining to this partnership, which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the ECN and CEPPS/NDI during this partnership. The Commission approved the concept note, along with a timeline to hold these regional dialogues in April 2014.

ECN officials Maheshwor Neupane, Leela Gharteula, and Komal Dhamala and external experts, constitutional lawyers Dr. Bhimarjun Acharya and Dr. Chandra Kanta Gyawali, formed a task force to formulate electoral reform recommendations based on the reports of the domestic and international observer groups from the November 2013 CA elections. These task force members will be responsible for:

- actively participating in all five regional events and providing input on the electoral reform recommendations;
- holding a series of small meetings and consultations with political parties, election administration and other national-level stakeholders to inform them of the reform priorities identified at the regional level;
- consolidating major findings from the regional events and additional information collected from national level meetings to present them at the national conference; and
- assisting the ECN and CEPPS/NDI in creating a follow-up mechanism for continued dialogue between registered political parties, CSOs and the ECN to ensure that advancements are made on the commitments made at the regional and national events.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process.

Media Programming on Polling

Radio Discussions on Poll Results: This quarter, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN, its partner Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN) and five regional partner stations produced a total of 72 hours of radio programming to discuss the results of the national opinion polls. The selected radio stations are listed below.

- [Saptakoshi FM](#), Sunsari (Eastern Development Region)
- [Krishnasar FM](#), Banke (Mid-Western Development Region)
- [Narayani FM](#), Parsa (Central Development Region)
- [Vijay FM](#), Nawalparasi (Western Development Region)
- [Shuklaphanta FM](#), Kanchanpur (Far Western Development Region)



Radio recordings in progress

AFN designed and produced the program using a focus group discussion format, with 10 to 12 local citizens voicing their opinions on the program topic. Participants included: members of the



Radio recording in progress

general public, government agency representatives, political party activists, students, teachers, social activists, human rights activists, civil society representatives and concerned stakeholders. Each station assigned two producers to produce the show in coordination with AFN. The radio programs, called *Lokantra Mantra*, also incorporated summaries of the results from the national opinion polls and synthesized outcomes of the discussion into white papers on a weekly basis. (Please see Appendix VII for broadcasting schedule and Appendix VIII for key issues discussed in radio programs this quarter.)

Program Findings and Outcome Summary: At the end of each radio program, every radio station prepared a summary of outcomes and opinions on the issue discussed. These outcome summaries, along with infographics, white papers and other resources, will be posted on a newly developed website to serve as a resource for political parties, researchers, and the general public (please see Appendix IX).

Visits to Partner Stations: In this quarter, AFN and IN conducted site visits to regional radio stations:

- Krishnasar FM, Nepalgunj;
- Suklaphanta FM, Mahendranagar;
- Krishnasar FM, Kalika-8, Bardiya;
- Suklaphanta FM, Krishnapur VDC, Kanchanpur;
- Radio Narayani, Chandra Nigahapur, Rautahat; and
- Vijaya FM, Dhodeni, Gaidakot, Nawalparasi.

Internews commissioned a videographer to document the radio programming and increase project visibility across various outlets and platforms. A three-minute video on production process of *Loktantra Mantra* will be produced as an additional program output. During the field visits, AFN, IN and local producers discussed the new knowledge gained, program shortcomings, and areas for improvement and additional support.



Visiting a radio station partner

Observations from the site visits revealed that the stations needed to work on preparation in order to ensure quality programming. Based on discussions with the producers, AFN and IN conducted a refresher course and review session for all producers responsible for programming at the regional level.

Refresher Course/Review Session for Producers: AFN organized a two-day midterm review session in Nagarkot, Bhaktapur on March 12 and 13. Twelve producers, including three women, participated in the meeting. The objective of the refresher training was to bring uniformity in terms of quality of the radio content, both at the national and district level. Madhu Acharya of IN and Rajan Parajuli of AFN jointly facilitated the workshop.



Participants during the refresher training

During the review session, the group reflected on existing problems and ways to overcome these obstacles. Key challenges identified were the selection of locations, guests, building rapport and inclusive participation. The group brainstormed on the branding of the program and ways to increase program impact.

Community of Practice Website: From January to March 2014, IN's Nepali partner Freedom Forum uploaded and updated 627 articles, news articles and opinion pieces covering elections, electoral issues and political party reform to the NepalElectionChannel.org website (*see Appendix X for the list of uploads*). Four English newspapers and eight Nepali newspapers were uploaded daily to provide up-to-date information on political, electoral, and constitutional developments. Although local elections have yet to be announced, the website continues to serve as a resource for journalists to remain informed of recent developments on election-related news.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions.

Intermediate Result 3.2: MPs incorporate constituent input into legislative processes.

Intermediate Result 3.3: CA/Legislature Parliament proceedings are more transparent.

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the CA/Parliament.

Sub-Objective 3.A.1: Strengthening the Legislative Drafting and Oversight Capacity of Parliament

CA/Parliamentary Support Coordination Meeting

On January 29, CEPPS/NDI held a coordination meeting with international organizations supporting the CA and the LP. To share current and future initiatives and activities to avoid duplication of efforts, UNDP, UN Women, International IDEA, The Asia Foundation (TAF) and CEPPS/NDI representatives provided a brief overview of their program components related to the CA and the LP. Participants agreed to organize a coordination meeting on a quarterly basis, with the second meeting scheduled for April 17 at International IDEA's office.

Consultations with the Secretary General of the LP Secretariat

During this quarter, CEPPS/NDI held several meetings with the Secretary General of the LP Secretariat. The meetings focused on preparations for the CA-LP member orientation and discussion of other potential areas for collaboration. CEPPS/NDI and the Secretary General devised a two-day orientation program for MPs, with the Institute compiling a resource binder for the orientation based on its experiences in organizing similar programs in other countries. Prior to this agreement, the Institute had shared sample orientation manuals from Ghana, Iraq, Macedonia and Yemen. The Secretariat mobilized its MP Service Department to solicit approval and support of the Speaker; send invitations to MPs and invited officials; provide the venue for the orientation; identify expert facilitators; and prepare additional materials.



Speaker Subas Chandra Nembang addressing the opening session of the orientation program

CEPPS/NDI and the Parliament Secretariat staff communicated regularly prior to the orientation program. The Secretariat also helped with revision of the resource binder and provided necessary inputs to make it more relevant in the context of Nepal (*see Appendices XI and XII for the orientation agenda and table of contents*).

CA-LP New Member Orientation

On March 29 and 30, CEPPS/NDI, in coordination with the LP Secretariat, implemented the orientation program for the members of CA-LP. During the orientation, legal experts and secretariat officials reviewed the CA rules, LP regulations, formal procedures (such as tabling bills), maintaining the decorum of the CA-LP and lawmaker conduct. The orientation discussed the work of the previous CA as well. Secretary General of the CA-LP Secretariat Manohar Prasad Bhattarai, Secretary Thakur Prasad Baral, Joint Secretaries Mukunda Sharma and Ram Sharan Ghimire, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Law, Justice, Constituent Assembly and Parliamentary Affairs Tek Prasad Dhungana and legal expert Dr. Bipin Adhikari facilitated the orientation.

“The orientation was very useful for all lawmakers. As a new lawmaker, I benefitted a lot from the presentations of experts.”

Hon. Kalpana Gachhadar (MJFN-D), CA-LP Member

A total of 373 CA-LP members (111 of them women) and 49 Secretariat officials attended the orientation program. As new members represent more than 80 percent of the CA-LP, most of the participants were unfamiliar with the rules and procedures of the legislative body. However, veteran politicians, including former Prime Minister Hon. Madhav Kumar

Nepal (CPN-UML), CPN-ML General Secretary Hon. Chandra Prakash Mainali, former Finance Minister Hon. Surendra Pandey and former minister and UCPN-M member Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, also participated.

Role of Political Parties and Parliamentary Leaders in Economic Reform Discussion

On February 25, FLA members and young CA members engaged with two experts on governance and economic reform at a program facilitated jointly by CEPPS/NDI and FNCCI. This meeting was a side event during the Nepal Economic Summit 2014, jointly organized and sponsored by FNCCI and the government of Nepal from February 24 to 26.

The discussion brought together 22 young leaders on topics related to the role of young parliamentarians and politicians in economic growth and foreign investment, with emphasis on the importance of political leadership in creating a sound investment climate for economic growth, and the role young leaders can play in streamlining bureaucratic procedures and systems to provide a conducive environment for investment. The discussion highlighted the



Malaysian expert Dato' J. Jegathesan during his presentation on the Malaysian model of economic development

critical role that political leaders should play in creating policies that will add jobs, attract foreign investment, contribute to economic growth for citizens and decrease poverty.

CEPPS/NDI, in cooperation with FNCCI, plans to remain engaged with young leaders from political parties and young elected CA-LP members by facilitating quarterly policy dialogues on the role young leaders can play in economic reform. Such interactions can lead to a better understanding of the role young leaders can play, generate ideas for policies and legislation needed for reform, and build networks between youth in politics and business to strengthen their role in the development of Nepal.

Supporting the Parliament Secretariat in Drafting the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure for the Forthcoming Parliament

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF coordinated with Secretary General Manohar Bhattarai to ensure the Secretariat received effective support through the drafting process and conducted review meetings on January 15 and 30, 2014. The 41-member rules of procedure drafting committee finalized the rules of procedure after a prolonged process of negotiations between the political parties. The committee made cursory changes in the previous rule of procedures and elected to resolve contentions politically rather than through expert advice. TAF is now coordinating with the Secretariat on their request for support in printing the rules of procedure.

Improving the Parliamentary Library

TAF expected to begin work in the library this quarter, but TAF halted work on the library improvement plan awaiting clarification on the USAID circular on possible construction activities. Once any issue is resolved, TAF will work with the Parliament Secretariat library and the contractor to begin work as soon as possible.

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents.

Sub-Objective 3.B.1: Supporting Greater Public Awareness and Engagement in Work of Parliament

Promoting Civic Awareness and Public Engagement on the Legislative Process

During this quarter, Binod Bhattarai of the Writing Workshop Pvt. Ltd (TWW) met regularly with Secretary General Manohar Bhattarai and other Secretariat personnel to ensure that the planned activities are in line with the Secretariat's needs in implementing their communications and public outreach strategy. TWW worked with the spokesperson's office and the Parliamentary Affairs Journalist Society to finalize an accreditation policy and code of conduct for journalists for parliamentary reporting. TAF worked with the spokesperson's office to enhance the capacity of the committees to hold press conferences and disseminate relevant information in a timely manner.

In this quarter, the technical officer on temporary assignment to the Secretariat worked with the spokesperson's office and a website design company contracted by TAF to facilitate the redesign

of the Secretariat's website, transfer of data and information for the website content. The spokesperson's office has requested two websites, one for the LP (www.parliament.gov.np) and the other for the CA (www.can.gov.np). The technical officer worked with the design company on the technical aspects of both sites.

TAF worked with Interface Nepal to broadcast a weekly 30-minute radio program. *Hamro Kanoon*. The program, which ran on over 30 different FM radio stations across the nation, ensuring an adequate geographical coverage of all regions, introduced and discussed various aspects of Nepali legislative processes. A total of 12 episodes on various issues aired during this reporting period, including: the right to justice in rural areas, the role of Dalit CA members in building the constitution, federalism and local elections. (*For a complete listing of the episodes and guests invited, please see Appendix XIII.*)

Building CSO Capacity to Monitor the Legislative Process

TAF, along with partner National Constitution Foundation (NCF), convened a coalition of five specific interest groups (Dalit, Madheshi, women, youth and Janajati) to conduct legislative audits. Most of the representatives in this coalition have a legal background, which helps in the audit of bills to study compliance with international norms and standards, legal and statutory coherence and other technical details. This quarter, NCF and the coalition audited the legislation listed below:

- Free and Compulsory Child Education Rights Ordinance 2070;
- Draft Disability Bill 2070;
- A Study of the Provisions Regarding Sexual Offences Provided in the Draft Penal Code 2067 and the Principles Subsequently Laid Down by the Supreme Court of Nepal;
- A Study of the Provisions for Compensation Provided in the Draft Penal Code 2067;
- A Study of the Reformatory Principles Adopted in the Draft Proposed Criminal Offence Sentencing and Execution Bill 2067;
- Unlawfully Acquired Property (Control, Regulation and Confiscation) Ordinance 2070;
- A Study of the Provisions Regarding Illegal Detention in the Draft Penal Code 2067; and
- A Study on the Concept of Jurisdiction Accepted in the Draft Penal Code 2067.

Multiple CA members attended the bill review programs this quarter. (*A complete event listing of the bill review programs and invited guests are provided in Appendix XIV. Summaries of the two bill review programs are provided in Appendix XV.*) Following each social audit, TAF coordinated with the New Spotlight Pvt. Ltd. to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the aforementioned audits through three print media outlets – Spotlight (English), Nepal (Nepali) and Shichhyak (Nepali).

Public Consultations with Youth and Women on Transitional Legislation

From January to March, TAF worked with its partners Samudayak Sarathi (SS) and Women Act (WA) to conduct the 13th wave of public consultations in 45 urban locations throughout the country. The 13th wave of public consultations focused on the issues related to land acquisition.

In each of the public consultations, a brief presentation was followed by moderated discussions on key features regarding local concerns on land acquisition, the economics of land acquisition, increased land conflicts, and responsibilities of the government. These deliberations have been crucial in bringing forth the issues and challenges within the local context in regard to land acquisition. Some of the major recommendations identified were standardized scientific land measurements, creating an effective compensation mechanism, participation of land owners in the compensation committee, and providing requirements for socio-economic impact assessment of land acquisition on various interest groups.

Overall, 2,302 participants attended this wave of public consultations. The gender composition and ethnic demographics of the participants are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Demographic and Ethnic Profile of Participants

Total	Gender			Age Group			Upper Caste		Adibasi/Janajati		Dalits		Un-identified	Muslims
	F	M	3rd	16-39	40-A	Not mentioned	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh	Hill/ Mtn	Terai/ Madesh		
2,302	953	1,349	0	1,131	1,070	101	1,147	235	448	173	109	43	133	14



Minister of Land Reform and Management, Hon. Dal Bahadur Rana Magar at the press release event

On March 13, Samudayik Sarathi and WA organized a press release event for the synopsis report of the 13th wave of public consultations on the proposed land acquisition bill to Honorable Dal Bahadur Rana Magar, Minister of Land Reform and Management. The press event, attended by various stakeholders from the media, CSOs and the legal sector, included a presentation of the findings of the public consultations across the 45 districts. The synopsis report highlighted the importance of framing a more pragmatic, just and timely legislation regarding land acquisition, as the current Land Acquisition Act 2034 (1977) is not sufficient to accommodate modern-day necessities. Minister Rana endorsed the

synopsis report and further committed to use the recommendations presented within the report in future discussions with members of the legislative committee. *(Please see Appendix XVI for synopsis report for journalists.)*

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

As local elections have yet to be announced, CEPPS did not hold any activities under this objective during the reporting period.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

CEPPS/IFES Nepal's new Chief of Party (CoP) Elizabeth Côté joined the CEPPS/IFES team on March 21, 2013.

Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

This quarter, comments were issued, mainly on amendments to the LSGA, 1999 and LBEP, 1992. CEPPS/IFES also continued to translate legal documents, ECN policies and ECN information materials issued for distribution to stakeholders such as the establishment of the Gender and Inclusion Committee and Unit and analysis of election results by gender, ethnicity and geography.

Last quarter, a senior gender consultant traveled to Nepal to conduct a gender assessment of CEPPS/IFES Nepal programming. The assessment aimed to determine the extent to which gender considerations are integrated throughout the CEPPS/IFES Nepal program. An assessment report highlighting lessons learned and providing recommendations was shared at the end of this quarter.

CEPPS/IFES continued to deliver its daily news clipping service on the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal throughout the reporting period. The service is received by twenty-two partners and election stakeholders, national and international.

Provision for Unforeseen Windows of Opportunity

Political will among ECN leadership to amend the Local Self Government Act and Local Bodies Election Procedure Act provided CEPPS/IFES an unforeseen window of opportunity to influence the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, among other stakeholders, in pushing the amendment forward. Given its close relationship with the ECN, CEPPS/IFES was well positioned to carry this initiative forward, working with the ECN to organize advocacy meetings within two days of the creation of the drafted amendments.

Other Meetings

On March 10, CEPPS/NDI met with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to discuss the potential coordination and collaboration with CEPPS/NDI's current and future efforts, especially those related to engaging CSOs. CEPPS/NDI will connect SFCG with relevant representatives from CEPPS/IFES and DEW-Nepal to pursue prospective avenues for collaboration and would share with them the Election Observation Reports Desk Review as it may provide SFCG with findings, which may help offer some guidance regarding future radio and TV programming for

the latter. Once available, SFCG would send CEPPS/NDI the schedule of their radio program to enable us to utilize the programs as a learning tool across our various portfolios.

V. RESULTS

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

Output Indicator 1.F: Number of individuals who receive USG-assisted political party training (F indicator, GJD 3.3) – quarterly

- This quarter, 151 individuals received party training and assistance from CEPPS/NDI.

Sub-Objective 1.A: Improve democratic political party organization structures and operations

IR 1.1: Political parties are more representative of Nepali citizens

- Six of CEPPS/NDI's political party partners (NC, CPN-UML, RPP, RPP-N, UCPN-M, and MJFN-D) received assistance and resources on internal strategy development and coalition formation.
- 45 FLA members, including 22 women, received technical knowledge from CEPPS/NDI to prepare them as youth trainers who will lead future regional youth workshops.
- IPWA's post-election gender audit recommended 50 percent women's representation in local elections and a fully closed proportional representation system, among other issues.

Sub-Objective 1.B: Enhance the electoral competitiveness of political parties

IR 1.3: Citizens have more information and analysis on the policy differences across political parties in Nepal

- IN and IDA conducted the second wave of opinion polling in 31 districts.
- When compared to the first IN/IDA survey conducted in September 2013, respondents' optimism towards country's overall direction has increased from 16 to 26 percent. Although a majority of respondents still believe the country is heading in the wrong direction (37 percent), this percentage has decreased significantly from 56 percent in September 2013. Survey responses show respondents believe the country's main problems are poverty and unemployment.
- The majority of respondents expect that the CA will be able to formulate a new constitution (52 percent), followed by those who think it will bring development in the country (42 percent), followed by those who think it will bring lasting peace (21 percent) and that it will create employment opportunities (21 percent). Some 41 percent report having high hopes from the forthcoming CA, while 36 percent report having low hope, and 16 percent report

having no hope at all. Irrespective of their level of hope, all respondents were asked what their specific expectations from the CA were.

- Compared to the survey in September 2013, respondents who have heard about federalism have increased slightly from 60 to 64 percent and, conversely, respondents who have not heard about it have decreased from 35 to 31 percent. With regards to the question whether Nepal should be a federal state or a unitary state, a higher proportion think Nepal should be a unitary state (38 percent) compared to those who think Nepal should be a federal state (23 percent). However, a significant number (39 percent) are undecided on this matter.

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants

Sub-Objective 2B: Strengthened Democratic Legal Framework for Elections

IR 2B.1: Improved legal framework that ensures transparent electoral procedures that promote genuine and competitive elections

Output Indicator 2B.1.2: Number of Laws or Amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance (F Indicator, GJD 3.2)-annual

- Draft amendments to Local Self Governance Act, 1999 and Local Bodies Election Procedures Act, 1992 include provisions for 40 percent and 50 percent women's representation and candidate requirements respectively.
- Commitment from major political party representatives on encouraging support for the above provisions mentioned within their parties, the CA and the Cabinet.

Sub-Objective 2C: Strengthened Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

IR 2C.1: Strengthened institutional capacity of the ECN to manage the electoral process

- As a result of the capacity building support received from CEPPS/IFES, ECN produced the following:
 - E-library module;
 - Training Management Information System (TMIS);
 - Social Study Teachers' Training Resource Book and Database; and
 - English translations of website content.
- ECN's first ever event commemorating International Women's Day.

IR 2C.2: Increased professionalism and competence of election officials

Output Indicator 2C.2.3: Number of electoral officials trained with USG assistance (F Indicator, GJD 3.2)-quarterly

- 402 electoral officials (15 percent women) trained with CEPPS/IFES technical and/or financial assistance.
- Knowledge increased by 61.3 percent among new ECN officer participants as a result of the training in Electoral Administration and Management BRIDGE workshop, as evidenced by pre- and post-testing.
- 37.5 percent knowledge gained in Electoral System BRIDGE workshop for high level ECN officials.

IR 2C.3: Integration of gender issues in electoral management

- Establishment of the Gender and Social Inclusion Committee under the leadership of an Election Commissioner and a Gender Unit under leadership of an ECN Joint Secretary after ongoing advocacy (see success story below).
- Six out of 11 members of Gender and Social Inclusion Committee are women, including three women representing truly marginalized groups such as Muslim women, Dalit and people with disabilities
- 2014 Godavari Declaration adopted following CEPPS/IFES-sponsored review workshop

Sub-Objective 2D: Expanded and Improved Delivery of Voter Education

IR 2D.1: Increased understanding of the electoral process among stakeholders and voters

- 112 enumerators (73 males, 39 females) trained in survey implementation.
- 93.6 percent of voter education survey respondents cast their vote in CA election; 97.5 percent of them cast valid votes.
- 727 post-election review meetings conducted in different VDCs.
- 8,546 voters enrolled on the voter list at the 17 District Administration Offices through the CSO help-desk support, 870 citizens received citizenship certificates and 1,720 citizens enrolled on the voter list at five government-conducted joint mobile camps in five districts, in March with CSOs' support.
- 7,679 persons of 327 existing community groups made aware of principles of democracy, inclusive society, civic, political and electoral rights of persons with disabilities.
- 444 Community Advocacy Forum members including 379 persons with disability (340 men and 104 women) participated in the VDC planning process which will provide space to include disabilities issues in district level planning.

- 16 management level staff of 5 partner CSOs trained on citizenship certificates and voter registration.

IR 2D.2: Increased local capacity in providing voter education

Output Indicator 2D.2.3: Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education (F indicator, GJD 3.2)-quarterly

- 23 national level and/or local level CSOs trained in promoting political participation and voter education in marginalized community.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

Sub-Objective 2.A: Enhance the capacity of civil society to monitor elections

IR 2.1: Non-partisan election monitoring efforts are more comprehensive and systematic

Outcome Indicator 2.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' published election monitoring reports

- CEPPS/NDI rated the quality of its domestic NGO partner's published election monitoring reports at 91 percent. To assess the quality of domestic NGOs' published election monitoring reports, CEPPS/NDI developed an election monitoring tool, with dimensions such as organizational capacity, methodology, and public information, to rate the reports from the 2008 elections against the DEW-Nepal report published following the 2013 CA elections. The baseline value for this indicator was 80 percent.

Outcome Indicator 2.1.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring methodology

- CEPPS/NDI assessed the quality of this indicator at 87 percent. The baseline value for this indicator was 67 percent.

Outcome Indicator 2.1.2: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring organizational capacity

- CEPPS/NDI assessed this indicator at 95 percent. The baseline value for this indicator was 87 percent.

Outcome Indicator 2.1.3.1: Quality of domestic NGOs' election monitoring public information and analysis

- CEPPS/NDI assessed this indicator at 90 percent. The baseline value for this indicator was 86 percent.

Sub-Objective 2.B: Strengthen the capacity of media to report on the electoral process

IR 2.2: Media are better informed to cover election related issues at the national and district levels

- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN, its local partner AFN, and five regional partner radio stations produced more than 72 half-hour radio programs this quarter at the national and regional level.

CEPPS Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions

Sub-Objective 3.A: Strengthen the legislative drafting capacity of the CA/Parliament

Output Indicator 3.F: Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events (F indicator, GJD 2.1) – quarterly

- CEPPS/NDI, in coordination with the LP, provided orientation and training to 373 parliamentarians, of which 111 were women, and 49 Secretariat officials.
- CEPPS/NDI, in coordination with FNCCI, conducted a one-day interaction program for 22 young leaders, including 13 parliamentarians, on challenges and reform areas of the country's economic development.

Sub-Objective 3.B: Increase communication between representatives and their constituents

IR 3.2: MPs incorporate constituent input into legislative processes

Output Indicator 3.2.1.2: Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact (F indicator, GJD 2.1) – quarterly

- 2,302 people, including 953 women, participated in CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF's 13th round of public consultations.
- MPs attended four TAF-sponsored forums to interact with their constituents.

CEPPS Objective 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

No results this quarter.

VI. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE INDICATORS

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY11 Total	FY12 Total	FY13 Total	FY14 Total	Award Total
Number of individuals who received USG-assisted political party	N/A	151	151	975	1,370	4,761	151	8,015

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY11 Total	FY12 Total	FY13 Total	FY14 Total	Award Total
training.								
Number of domestic election observers and/or party agents trained with USG assistance.	N/A	0	0	0	0	1,256	432	1,688
Number of laws or amendments to ensure credible elections drafted with USG technical assistance	2	N/A	2	0	0	0	2	2
Number of USG-assisted public sessions held regarding proposed changes to the country's legal framework	0	N/A	0	6	2	0	0	8
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote electoral reform and/or improvements in the electoral system.	0	N/A	0	29	18	0	0	47
Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance.	2	N/A	2	3	5	11	3	22
Number of election officials trained with USG assistance	402	N/A	402	88,199	345	645	2,441	91,630
Number of local CSOs strengthened that promote political participation and voter education	22	N/A	22	0	0	0	22	22
Number of national legislators and national legislative staff attending USG sponsored training or educational events.	N/A	435	435	273	123	122	435	953

Foreign Assistance Indicators	IFES	NDI	Quarter Total	FY11 Total	FY12 Total	FY13 Total	FY14 Total	Award Total
Number of public forums resulting from USG assistance in which national legislators and members of the public interact.	N/A	4	4	18	11	5	4	38

VII. EVALUATION

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal.

This quarter, with the successful completion of the November 2013 CA elections, CEPPS/NDI focused on building consensus and cooperation among and between its political party partners.

CEPPS/NDI's work this quarter focused on several consultative meetings with the political parties. CEPPS/NDI organized these in-depth discussions to support political parties in becoming more representative organizations. This approach to party assistance was one of the recommendations from the mid-term evaluations. The consultative meetings were part of a tailored individual assistance plan for each of the major political party partners of CEPPS/NDI. The main conclusion for all the consultations has been to focus on how the different components of the party work together and coordinate its activities. Going forward, CEPPS/NDI's emphasis will be on the relationship between party organization and parliamentary party, the role the party secretariat should play as the main coordinating body in the party, and how to strategically strengthen party branches using CEPPS/NDI trained party trainers.

CEPPS/NDI supported IPWA to conduct a post-election gender audit workshop. The post-gender audit will form the base for the strategic work of IPWA in the coming years. It has specific recommendations for political parties, ECN, CA-LP and civil society on how to increase participation of women in politics. The report from the gender audit also could form the basis of a common political platform for women in politics in Nepal.

This quarter, CEPPS/NDI started its new activities with parties' women's wings. CEPPS/NDI held meetings with women leaders and identified activities to develop strategies to address barriers for women's participation. CEPPS/NDI focused on two parties that will hold national conventions this year, CPN-UML and UCPN-M, to assist the women's wings in developing strategies for increased women's participation to be presented during these conventions.

Through the second wave of national opinion polls, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN and its partner IDA gathered information on citizens' expectations for the constitution-drafting process. Participants expect the constitution to address a wide range of issues, with the majority of those surveyed expecting the constitution to: address issues of gender equality, inclusion, and fundamental rights; guarantee peace; and tackle corruption. They believe that inclusiveness and fairness will improve government performance and reduce the possibility for insecurity.

CEPPS/IFES OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants.

Sub-Objective 2B: Strengthened democratic legal framework for elections

It has taken some time for political parties, state officials and opinion leaders to recover from the successful November 2013 CA election and get back to the work at hand. However, important elements have slowly been put in place and the CA is getting organized. There are many elements to support a positive and constructive political outcome, including:

- The adoption of CA rules and procedures;
- The establishment of CA working committees and the majority decision to have the new constitution ready by January 22, 2015;
- Intention by both the ECN and new government representatives to hold local elections, part of which, according Chief Election Commissioner, could take place as early as June.

CEPPS/IFES is well positioned to push the ECN on legal framework reform. Its integral role in the adoption of draft gender amendments to the Local Bodies Election Procedure Act demonstrates its impact. While still uncertain, the slightly more tangible nature of both the constitution writing process and local government elections, two important assumptions in CEPPS/IFES programming, will provide CEPPS/IFES an opportunity to continue to mobilize stakeholders around tangible goals, such as passage of inclusive local government election amendments.

Sub-Objective 2C: Strengthened Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

While still uncertain, the ECN anticipates a busy period ahead, both with by-elections and eventual local government elections. In this period, the ECN demonstrated leadership by communicating its gender policy and accepted CEPPS/IFES' support in establishing both the Gender Unit and Committee, which shows a commitment that can serve as a model to other electoral stakeholders.

Moving forward, this quarter will be a pivotal one for CEPPS/IFES inclusion efforts within the ECN, and will allow CEPPS/IFES to push even further, now with the ECN's own structures, for equal participation of women in ECN management roles and professional development/ training opportunities.

Sub-Objective 2D: Expanded and Improved Delivery of Voter Education

CEPPS/IFES' six partner CSOs have shown an exceptional degree of engagement. They have shown flexibility and capacity to adapt to an unpredictable environment which will help to guide the next 15 month phase of CSO activities. With surveys from the past quarters reporting the overwhelming success of CEPPS/IFES voter education campaigns, including significant reduction in invalid votes among targeted marginalized communities and increases in voter

turnout, CEPPS/IFES and CSO partners are well placed to renew their focus on voter registration and citizenship certificates.

CEPPS/NDI OBJECTIVE 2: Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes.

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN requested AFN to conduct a post-training evaluation of the training impact for journalists reporting on the national opinion polls. These trainings were conducted between July-September 2013 in five development regions; 70 journalists took part in the post-training evaluation. This survey highlighted the fact that a majority of the participants agreed the training has helped them to enhance their reporting skills and has also built credibility, increased audience and polished their story writing skills. The respondents also expressed the need for further assistance in field research, different skills for different media platforms, and continued support in distributing outputs to mainstream media platforms under this project.

Almost 46 percent of the participants have produced one to four stories based on training skills acquired during the training, compared to 14.29 percent who did not do any reporting. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said they produced 5-7 stories based on the acquired skills. Those who have not produced any stories have cited “desk based editing jobs” and stories not published by Kathmandu-based mainstream media offices as the reasons.

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee DEW/Nepal played a key role in the formation of the EOCG, comprising national and international organizations, as a mechanism to channel and communicate election related news. EOCG has so far held 14 meetings, during which these organizations shared election related information contributing to more transparency among CSOs in the electoral processes.

With the completion of the CA elections, DEW-Nepal published a detailed report based on their observation of the elections, which features key findings as well as recommendations to make the electoral processes more transparent. DEW-Nepal recruited almost 6,000 volunteers in 61 districts across the country to observe the November 2013 CA elections. A temporary call center was set up at the NDI office to receive real time information from the field in which 392 DEW-Nepal volunteers actively reported every phase of the voting process. This enabled CEPPS/NDI to share information in the form of press releases on a timely basis; three press releases were issued on election day.

Loktantra Mantra, the radio program organized by CEPPS/NDI’s subgrantee IN, is providing an opportunity for regional radio stations to increase its outreach to VCDs, which has never been done before. This has expanded the program to include voices of more citizens and stakeholders.

CEPPS Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions

With the completion of the CA elections in November 2013 and the formation of the Cabinet, CEPPS/NDI is working to strengthen its relation with the CA-LP. Recognizing that many of the current CA members are first-term parliamentarians, CEPPS/NDI designed a needs assessment

survey that will determine the needs and priorities of these parliamentarians so that future programs can address these needs. The survey will focus on youth and women CA members, two groups who are historically marginalized and do not benefit from the same levels of assistance as their senior male colleagues.

Following the election of the new CA, the CEPPS program is once again able to involve legislative members in various activities. CEPPS/NDI supported the CA-LP Secretariat in the organization and implementation of a new member orientation, which equipped new MPs with relevant information and knowledge about the role of MPs, parliamentary rules of procedures and parliamentary etiquette. This activity responded to a challenge faced by the previous 2008 CA, whose performance was seen as weak due to the MPs' lack of knowledge on their role and responsibilities.

Realizing the importance of linking governance assistance work with economic development, CEPPS/NDI partnered with FNCCI to organize a roundtable discussion with young MPs and politicians to discuss the youth role in economic development. CEPPS/NDI and FNCCI will follow this event with quarterly policy dialogues to help both politicians and economic experts to understand relevant policies and legislation that need to be introduced or amended in parliament to enhance economic and social development.

CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF and its partners invited CA members to share their opinions during the various episodes of their radio program. CA members also have attended the legislative audits. TAF will invite CA members to the next waves of public consultations. This ensures that TAF's activities under the CEPPS program are promoting interaction between national legislators and the general public.

TAF and its partners strengthened the monitoring and evaluation efforts for the 13th wave of public consultations to ensure the effectiveness of the meetings in promotion of citizen participation in the legislative process. The analysis of 120 questionnaires from 12 randomly selected locations illustrated an overall increase in knowledge retention of the participants. Prior to the public consultation, 58 percent of participants knew about the dispute resolving mechanism body, i.e. Appellate Court. After the public consultation, 91 percent of participants knew about this mechanism. Knowledge regarding specific provisions about using the current market price for valuation of land price for compensation during land acquisition increased by 20 percent; understanding of the definition of public interest for land acquisition increased by 83 percent. The public consultations have provided a platform to the larger public to discuss various on-going legislative issues that are faced by the local communities and are of public interest.

On January 9, to seek feedback on the *Hamro Kanoon* program's modality, TAF's partner Interface Nepal, in coordination with the local Kalinchowk FM station, held their fifth focus group discussion in Charikot, Dolakha. Participants and active program listeners expressed appreciation for the program's sensitivity and the relevancy of the issues raised in the program. Krishna Basnet, a participant from the Nepal Bar Association, mentioned that radio programs such as *Hamro Kanoon* play a crucial role in providing information to people working in institutions at the implementation level such as the Bar Association. The next discussion is planned for mid-April in Dharan, Sunsari.

VIII. SUCCESS STORIES

IPWA: Between 2011 and 2012, under the CEPPS III program, IPWA expanded its sub-committees in 15 districts across the country. Almost three years after the formation of IPWA district sub-committees, more than half of these committees are still functioning. To gauge the functioning aspect of a district sub-committee, CEPPS/NDI developed two criteria: 1) convenes a meeting twice a year; and 2) has identified/addressed one issue in the community per year. CEPPS/NDI identified some trends consistent across all functioning district sub-committees.

As a multiparty alliance, IPWA has provided district level women leaders with an effective platform to strengthen women's voices, not only within political parties, but also in their districts. While women leaders agreed to the challenges of working in a multi-party forum, they pointed out that the positive aspects far outweigh the negative ones. Irrespective of their party ideology, these women leaders remain united in their common objective of women's empowerment.

Women leaders opined that IPWA has strengthened their capacity, which in turn has enabled them to effectively lobby government officials and receive annual funds earmarked by their DDC for women's development. With the skills learned from IPWA, women leaders present themselves as a united group, committed to women's development. As Shantila Karki, IPWA member in Terathum, says, "proper preparation helped us to present ourselves coherently before government officials and win funds."

Such fund-raising successes have helped district IPWA sub-committees sustain themselves, and also raised their profile locally. This has resulted in regular interaction with constituents, following which women leaders have identified priority local issues. Some districts organized VDC-level leadership training in response to local needs; while some districts, such as Baitadi, built safe houses for women suffering from domestic violence. The district of Baitadi is an example of excellent coordination and collaboration between local organizations (IPWA, CARE Nepal) and government bodies in solving local problems.

In addition, IPWA has strengthened women leaders' profiles within their parties. Party leaders consult IPWA on issues related to women and also work to ensure that activities related to women are channeled through IPWA. While women leaders openly admit that changes, in terms of inclusion and equality of women in decision making processes, may not take place overnight, they remain optimistic that such changes may occur in the not too distant future. As Sarswati Neupane, IPWA member in Pyuthan, says, "we forget our differences and work together as a team to give women across all walks of life a stronger voice in decisions that affect their everyday lives."

ECN and Gender: During this quarter, CEPPS/IFES' long term effort towards a systemic integration of gender considerations within the ECN resulted in two major breakthroughs. Thanks to continuous and persistent effort on the part of CEPPS/IFES' Electoral Training Expert, the ECN made significant steps in mainstreaming gender considerations throughout its processes. First, the ECN proposed an amendment to the Local Bodies Election Procedure Act,

1992 to set a provision for 50 percent women candidacy in local level executive positions. Following the introduction of the amendment, CEPPS/IFES and the ECN held a meeting with 31 prominent opinion leaders (18 women, 13 men) including members of the Gender and Inclusion Committee, female leaders of major political parties, current CA members, and representatives of implementing partner agencies to successfully lobby for the smooth passing of the amended Local Bodies Election Procedure Act through the parliament.

Secondly, after extensive lobbying efforts within the ECN itself, CEPPS/IFES convinced the ECN to establish a high level Gender and Inclusion Committee with the representation of women from marginalized communities, along with a Gender Unit. These two bodies will be tasked with ensuring that the ECN's new gender policy is implemented and mainstreamed throughout ECN activities and procedures. Ms. Ila Sharma, the only female commissioner at the ECN thanked CEPPS/IFES' training expert Rhadika Regmi for her tireless work: "Without her relentless efforts working in and out of meetings, in the halls and 'lobbies', briefing ECN officials and commissioners, we would not have been able to succeed this far".

Loktantra Mantra: Among the media consumption questions during the second wave of national opinion polls, 11.3 percent of radio listeners reported listening to the *Loktantra Mantra* program, while 85.2 percent of the respondents said that they have not listened to the program. This is considerably high listenership for the program, which has been on and off the air in the last two years and recently on air during the last five months. The response of the audience is very encouraging.

IX. CHALLENGES

- With the formation of the CA-LP, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF and its partners will focus on presenting the synthesized findings of the public consultations on the draft bills to the relevant MPs and committees, including the legislative committee. The advocacy meetings planned for next quarter will focus on sharing the findings and recommendations of the public consultations that are focused on highlighting the concerns and interests of women and youth on specific draft bills.
- As the parliament has yet to elect committee chairs and introduce any legislation, CEPPS/NDI has been unable to provide technical assistance and support to parliamentary committees.
- Due to the continued political disputes between the main government coalition parties and the opposition, the CA lacks a clear agenda to move government policies forward. Parties also lack coordination, which has resulted in inconsistent messaging and confusion. For example, a number of MPs from NC and CPN-UML criticized the government and their parties for not having discussed the government political program with them prior to presenting it in Parliament.
- The political climate and focus of the parties in internal factions have made it challenging for CEPPS/NDI to gain attention of the parties on internal reform work/party assistance and on identifying issues that the party should prioritize to strengthen its organization at the

national and local level. This has especially been challenging for NC, CPN-UML and UCPN-M.

- Challenges remained with regard to the uncertainty of the ECN electoral calendar and the timeline for local government elections. As of this quarter, local government elections are unlikely to take place before the monsoon season. CEPPS partners will adjust their workplan activities as necessary to respond to government priorities.
- While CEPPS/IFES emphasizes women's rights in its program activities, aiming to improve women's participation throughout the electoral process, women continue to be underrepresented in CEPPS/IFES-sponsored trainings. For example, only one of the 16 participants at the CSO training in March 2014 was a woman. For the next quarter, CEPPS/IFES will implement affirmative measures that more actively encourage women's equal participation throughout workshops and trainings. Interventions could include allocating half of the spots available to women and encourage organizations to send female representatives or a team consisting of one male and one female representative, as well as working with CSOs to organize trainings at times and places that are convenient to women.

X. LESSONS LEARNED

- Through a series of site visits, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN recognized that radio station producers needed additional training to successfully complete the production of the *Loktantra Mantra* program. Observations from the site visits revealed that the stations needed to work on preparation – guest selection, individual story seeking, pre-programming interview preparation – in order to ensure quality programming. However, the efforts made by stations to address local opinions and voices on national agendas through the program are exemplary. By organizing a refresher course for producers, IN aims to make the remainder of the program as effective as possible.
- Through post-election review workshops, CEPPS/IFES identified the need to provide additional assistance to the ECN in collecting voter data. Post-election data shows discrepancies in sex-disaggregation of voters as well as youth votes, while the disability election report highlighted poll-workers' failure to collect any data on people with disabilities. Accurate data collection on voters is important to identify gaps or improvements in marginalized groups' electoral participation. More should be done to emphasize the importance of accurately identifying youth and male or female voters in poll-worker trainings, as well as encouraging the ECN to integrate disability indicators into its voter tracking sheets.
- Effective coordination between partners is always important to scale up impact, but as Nepal moves into a post-election time period, grappling with such major developments as adopting a new electoral system, partnership becomes even more crucial. CEPPS/IFES' coordination with IDEA and UNDP/ESP to provide an electoral systems training to high-level ECN representatives in March marked a first step in this improved coordination. In the next quarter, more needs to be done to ensure that electoral system work, as well as collaboration with CEPPS/NDI on constitutional issues, is deepened.

- Following three phases of FLA, a total of 17 FLA graduates ran in the November 2013 CA elections, either on first-past-the-post (FPTP) tickets or under the proportional representation (PR) system. This is indicative of the success these youth leaders have had in terms of gaining visibility within their party and in being assigned positions of responsibility. While none of the graduates won seats in the elections, in a post-election briefing session organized by CEPPS/NDI, these graduates collectively identified some of the challenges they face, with finances being the major concern. During the session, graduates came up with ways to strengthen youth's voice in the CA. One such suggestion was to build working relationships with young influential leaders in the current CA. Once a rapport is established, it will be easier for the graduates to push forward with a youth agenda that these leaders can raise in their respective committees. Following the briefing session, FLA graduates formed an ad-hoc planning committee, whose members will travel to different districts and develop a youth agenda to be presented to these young influential leaders. CEPPS/NDI aims to strengthen the FLA as a multiparty youth platform by increasing the number of FLA master trainers and expanding FLA programming at the regional level. In doing this, CEPPS/NDI will be able to strengthen the ownership among youth in FLA for multiparty work and also allow the youth to take on additional responsibilities within their parties.

XI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

CEPPS Objective 1: Political parties more effectively contribute to democratic processes in Nepal

- Based on this quarter's gender audit workshop, IPWA will develop a report including recommendations for 50 percent women's representation in local elections, a fully closed PR system, fast track courts to deal with issues related to violence against women and children, implementation of all international treaties signed, and citizenship issues to the ECN, political parties, civil society, media and the international community. The report will focus on how to best assist women so that they may increase their representation in future elections. This report will also be used as an advocacy tool to lobby for the constitution making process and improvements in the electoral framework.
- CEPPS/NDI will conduct Phase III of its national ToT.
- In coordination with the electoral reform dialogues in five development regions, CEPPS/NDI will hold regional and national dialogues on political party legislation and reform.
- CEPPS/NDI will continue to hold single and multiparty workshops and internal training planning meetings.
- CEPPS/NDI will conduct follow-up regional trainings for FLA on the role of youth in the constitution-making process.
- CEPPS/NDI will provide technical support to its party partners' women's wings.

- CEPPS/NDI will organize district meetings and trainings for two of its IPWA district chapters.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee IN will develop the questionnaire and deploy the survey for the third round of national opinion polls.

CEPPS/IFES Objective 2: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants

For the next quarter, CEPPS/IFES plans to focus on the following activities and, depending on the established election schedule, prepare for by-elections and local government elections and assist the ECN in advising the CA on electoral reforms. These activities are based on the assumption that constitution writing takes place in the upcoming quarter, paving the way for local government elections in late 2014 or early 2015.

Sub-Objective 2B: Strengthened Democratic Legal Framework for Elections

- Continue to provide technical guidance to the ECN in analysis and recommendations for policies, regulations and directives necessary to conduct local government elections;
- Continue to provide technical expertise to the ECN as they review and advise the CA on electoral law reforms once the constitution writing process gets underway;
- Continue to assist the ECN in organizing interactive discussions and consensus building dialogue platforms to gain acceptance and broad consensus on an electoral legal framework for the local bodies election;
- Building on the momentum created by the BRIDGE training on electoral systems, encourage ECN officials to pursue discussion and consultation on overall reform with a view to provide guidance to the CA;
- In joint collaboration with CEPPS/NDI, work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on the draft political party law;
- Coach ECN counterparts to prepare a Strategy Plan and an Action Plan for the recently established Gender and Social Inclusion Committee and Unit, including drafting a booklet on Gender and Elections;
- Support ECN lobbying efforts to promote its new amended Local Bodies Election Procedure Act, 1992 introducing a provision for 50 percent women's candidacy quota;
- In collaboration with CEPPS/ NDI, provide needed support for the organization of regional and national fora on the proposed revised Political Party Act; and

- With the upcoming by-elections CEPPS-CEPPS/IFES will support the ECN in revising its electoral procedures and regulations.

Sub-Objective 2C: Strengthened Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Provide technical assistance to ECN in further consolidating the post-election review sessions' reports and conducting a review of the consolidated reports for incorporating valid feedback in the ECN's 5-year (2014-2019) Strategy Plan;
- Work with ECN to develop their 5-year strategy plan;
- Implement with BRIDGE partners the remaining 2014 BRIDGE program;
- Work with the ECN in preparing and producing their training policy, guidelines and plans for 2014;
- Build capacity of all levels of ECN and DEO staff on financial management and reporting, and in procurement and logistics;
- Conduct needs assessment of DEO capacity to prepare for and conduct local government elections;
- Handover ECN website after conducting a training for ECN selected website management team;
- Work with ECN to implement the TIMS;
- Provide technical assistance to the ECN gender and social inclusion committee and unit ; help design gender and social inclusion strategic and action plans; and
- Provide technical assistance for the creation of a gender and elections booklet for the gender and social inclusion committee.

Sub-Objective 2D: Expanded and Improved Delivery of Voter Education

- Advise ECN/EEIC in planning, strategizing and implementing voter education and outreach activities for the upcoming voter registration drive;
- Continue to provide technical assistance to and develop materials for ECN/EEIC in conducting electoral education for social studies teachers trainings from selected districts;
- Continue to technically assist CSO sub-awardees in developing and producing voter education materials and conducting outreach activities with marginalized communities;
- Publish the five VE CSOs' second and third round of survey reports and disseminate findings with relevant stakeholders;

- Form pilot District Election Networks and Village Election Networks of election stakeholders and DEOs in selected districts through CSO subgrantees;
- Continue to provide voter registration help desk support to DEOs and DAOs, as needed;
- Conduct needs assessment survey on the status of citizenship certificates in marginalized communities;
- Develop and publish IEC materials for citizenship certificate program and disseminate;
- Coordinate with relevant stakeholders to plan and conduct joint mobile camps for citizenship certificate dissemination and voter registration for targeted marginalized communities;
- Support all District Advocacy Forums and Community Advocacy Forums to implement advocacy plans;
- Publish DEAM report and disseminate findings with relevant stakeholders; and
- Adapt current outreach initiatives to support in part the by-elections in the 3 districts covered by CSO sub-grantees.

CEPPS Objective 2 (CEPPS/NDI): Civil society initiatives more effectively contribute to transparent electoral processes

- CEPPS/NDI will provide a no-cost extension to sub-grantee DEW-Nepal to observe the CA by-elections in four constituencies; conduct a study of invalid votes in four districts; hold a national ToT on election observation and education; and facilitate capacity building training for DEW-Nepal members.
- CEPPS/NDI, in partnership with the ECN, will hold electoral reform dialogues in Nepal's five development regions in April and May.
- CEPPS/NDI, in partnership with the ECN and CEPPS/IFES, will hold a national conference on electoral reform.
- CEPPS/NDI, in partnership with local CSOs, will hold citizen's assemblies in five regions in order to gain citizens' input on the work of parliament.
- CEPPS/NDI will carry out a voter registration information campaigns in five districts where the voter registration turnout is low.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews and its partner AFN will continue production and broadcasts of the *Loktantra Mantra* radio program with five regional radio station partners.

- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews will produce a three-minute video on the *Loktantra Mantra* radio program.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee Internews will launch a website to distribute the national opinion poll results with infographics, radio programs, white papers, and other project output. Internews will continue updates of the NepalElectionChannel.org website with news on elections, constitution drafting, and other media and political developments.

CEPPS Objective 3: The CA/Legislature Parliament more effectively fulfills its democratic functions

- CEPPS/NDI will organize a series of needs assessment sessions with all young MPs, aged 40 and below, who are in the current CA-LP. The sessions are designed to assess what skills they require to enhance their capacity to better perform in the parliament and also identify their areas of interest to develop more expertise in a particular area.
- CEPPS/NDI will organize targeted workshops for parliamentary party group members.
- CEPPS/NDI, in coordination with FNCCI, will organize a policy dialogue with FLA and young MPs to discuss a relevant policy or piece of legislation for which youth MPs can advocate for in Parliament.
- CEPPS/NDI will organize roundtable discussions on “Executive-Legislative Relations” and “Role of Government and Opposition Parties” to help identify challenges of the executive-legislative relationship and compile recommendations to facilitate the better relations.
- CEPPS/NDI will organize one roundtable discussion between women parliamentarians, IPWA, interest groups and CSOs. Potential issues for discussion could include findings from the citizens’ assemblies. This discussion will ensure meaningful involvement of constituents and enhance their ownership in the legislation process. Additionally, it will strengthen constituent and representative relations, which is fundamental for a parliamentarian to fulfill his/her representative function successfully.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will continue to work with TWW and the Secretariat to implement activities based on the approved outreach and communication strategy.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will coordinate with the Secretariat to complete the upgrade of the parliamentary library space.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will continue to work with SS and WA to conduct public consultations in 45 urban locations on a quarterly basis.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will work with NCF and interest groups to identify and audit relevant legislation in the coming quarters. Furthermore, TAF will coordinate with New Spotlight to ensure a proper dissemination of the findings/recommendations of the interest group audits through the print media.

- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will work with Interface Nepal to identify relevant legislations and provide assistance to produce and broadcast the weekly radio show. In the coming quarter, Interface Nepal will conduct a series of capacity building trainings to the focal persons of the radio stations.
- CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will coordinate with the Parliament Secretariat to design a school visit program.
- At the request of the Secretary General, CEPPS/NDI subgrantee TAF will provide each parliamentary committee with a heavy-duty printer to generate press materials and communiques on a regular basis. The printers will support the committees in disseminating information in bulk, conducting press conferences and improving record management. This activity is expected to commence in the next quarter.

CEPPS OBJECTIVE 4: International assessment mission provides impartial appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for future electoral processes

- Local elections will not be held in the next quarter, so there will be no activities under this objective.

MONITORING, ANALYZING AND REPORTING ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

- CEPPS will continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on preparations for local government elections, the constitution-writing environment and identification of key issues.

XII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Appendix I – District Map of “Hear Us” National Opinion Poll
 Appendix II – Summary of National Opinion Poll (2nd Wave)
 Appendix III – Findings and Final Presentation of National Opinion Poll (2nd Wave)
 Appendix IV – Cross Tabs of National Opinion Poll (2nd Wave)
 Appendix V – DEW-Nepal Election Observation Report (in Nepali)
 Appendix VI – Press Coverage of DEW-Nepal’s Election Observation Report
 Appendix VII – *Loktantra Mantra* Broadcasting Schedule
 Appendix VIII – List of *Loktantra Mantra* Program Issues
 Appendix IX – National White Papers for *Loktantra Mantra* (in Nepali)
 Appendix X – List of Uploads to NepalElectionChannel.org
 Appendix XI – CA-LP Orientation Agenda
 Appendix XII – CA-LP Orientation Table of Contents
 Appendix XIII – List of *Hamro Kanoon* Programs
 Appendix XIV – List of Bill Review Programs
 Appendix XV – Summaries of Bill Review Programs
 Appendix XVI – Synopsis Report of the Public Consultations (in Nepali)